



WASHINGTON LEGISLATORS Back to School

Bill Format

A Model for formatting a bill

STUDENT MODEL LEGISLATURE

Sponsored by _____

[Student(s) names]

Committee Action:

AN ACT TO [complete the title in all capital letters] Every law should embrace only one subject and that should be expressed in the title. Make the title as concise as possible, but broad enough to clearly indicate the scope of the bill.

Be it enacted by the student model legislature of _____ state _____

Section 1. Definitions In complete sentences, define any word or phrase used in your title which might be subject to confusion or result in unnecessary debate.

Section 2. Purpose The purpose section simply states concisely why you think the bill should be enacted. The purpose section is optional.

Section 3. Provisions This clause is the most important part of your bill. In complete sentences explain exactly what you want to happen and how. What you say here should say the same thing as your title only in much greater detail. The bill should be written in the present tense. If you want to require something to happen, use the word "shall" [eg. no person shall water their lawn more than three times a week during a drought]. Try to anticipate questions that people might have after reading your bill and address those questions in this section.

Section 4. Penalty Clause This clause is necessary only if your bill makes something illegal. If you are designating some behavior a crime, you must specifically say if it will be considered a misdemeanor or felony. Check your state's criminal code to see what the penalties are for each level of misdemeanor or felony.

Section 5. Appropriations Clause This clause is necessary only if your bill requires the expenditure of money. Indicate the amount of money to be spent and how that amount of money will be raised.

Section 6. Enactment Clause This clause tells when the bill will become effective. Examples include: This bill will become effective upon the signature of the Governor or this bill will become effective 90 days after signature by the Governor.